Athesim is Dead

In 2009, Joss Whedon created a moderate stir when he gave speech in response to receiving the Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award in Cultural Humanism at Harvard University's Memorial Church. You can see his brief speech below:

Some Christian bloggers protested the blasphemy in his speech, but it should have been the humanists objecting.

"...there's a lot of best sellers, like *God is not Great*, or the *God Delusion*... but I find those books to be, I mean (sigh), well, they're old news, for me... For me, the important thing is not that we're right. The important thing is 'Where do we go from here?' If we are to have a foothold in American or world society, how do we codify our moral structure without the sky bully looking down on us telling us what to do? I'm here to tell you I don't really have the answer."

Whedon echoed the sentiments that G.K. Chesterton had stated decades earlier, when he called Atheism "The supreme example of a simple faith," and "one of the dead heresies," – in 1922.

> The man says there is no God; if he really says it in his heart, he is a certain sort of man so designated in Scripture. But, anyhow, when he has said it, he has said it; and there seems to be no more to be said. The conversation seems likely to languish. The truth is that the atmosphere of excitement, by which the atheist lived, was an atmosphere of thrilled and shuddering theism, and not of atheism at all; it was an atmosphere of defiance and not of denial.
>
> Irreverence is a very servile parasite of reverence; and has starved with its starving lord. After this first fuss about the merely aesthetic effect of blasphemy, the whole thing vanishes into its own void. If there were not God, there would be no atheists.
>
> –*To Simple to Be True*

To further prove this point, after his insightful proclamation that the New Atheism had nothing new to offer, Whedon offers the only ideas he has – humorous suggestions such as moving the Holy Land to Jamaica, or a new schism or more Popes to make Catholicism more lively (little does he know how lively Catholic politics are!). With nothing new to offer, he sinks back down to the level of defiance. The only thing atheists can build is a rise out of believers.

Certainly, the field of apologetics should prepare for intellectual debate as always, but when your opponent's case is that he can reasonably prove a negative (which is impossible with logic) or that life originated from inorganic material naturally (a medieval alchemist's theory which was debunked centuries ago) it is about a fruitless as having a battle of wits with an unarmed opponent.

Atheists decry religion for being a human construct. But if we are all accidents of evolution, products of "survival of the fittest," how can one human deny another's claim of racial superiority without resorting to a myth of equality and a human-constructed code of ethics? And if you cannot condemn genocide, what moral code can you proclaim, or what so-called evil can you condemn? Either we are created equal, as the *Declaration of Independence* proclaims, or we certainly evolved unequal, as Chesterton observed.

At its best, atheism today is about the emotional, not rational, reaction to hypocrisy and bloodshed perpetrated by those who proclaim belief in God. At its worst, it is the passionate and emotional denial of external limits and definitions of morals, usually for personal, not logical, reasons.

So do not fear the simple faith of the atheist; it is not new, it has not grown or developed like a living thing. The most effective way to combat its necrophilia-like allure is to live as Christ taught, not argue with those who may very well be rightfully angry with hypocritical Christians.

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